CO-OP OWNED BRAND

BRAND STANDARDS

Updated: May 2025

OWNED BY YOU.
RIGHT BY YOU.

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GUIDANCE TO USING THIS DOCUMENT

This guide has been developed for all colleagues involved in the Own Brand Development process and & our Supplier Partners to provide clarity on the standards we aspire each of our Co-op Owned Brands to comply to.

The brand standards apply to all categories included including Food, Non-Food, BWS and Horticulture.

This document should be referred to regularly during the Stage & Gate process and during Quality Benchmarking to ensure we are consistent in the standards we set for each of our own brands to provide our customers with a consistent brand experience.

We have not provided an exhaustive list of standards & guidelines for every sub-category and product area as we recognise the frequency of market benchmark changes & shifts in customer expectations over time.

Our Co-op Brand Strategy team are available to consult on areas where a Sub-Brand guideline isn't achievable, or for where it is unclear if a product meets the standards or not. Their contact details are in the appendix.

N.B. This document sits alongside our existing Technical & Policy requirements for all of Co-op Brand products and isn't designed to replace any guidance found within these.

IRRESISTIBLE

CO-OP OWNED BRAND PORTFOLIO

We operate a 'BETTER, BEST' brand tier hierarchy to enable choice for the consumer considering mission, usage and budget

BETTER

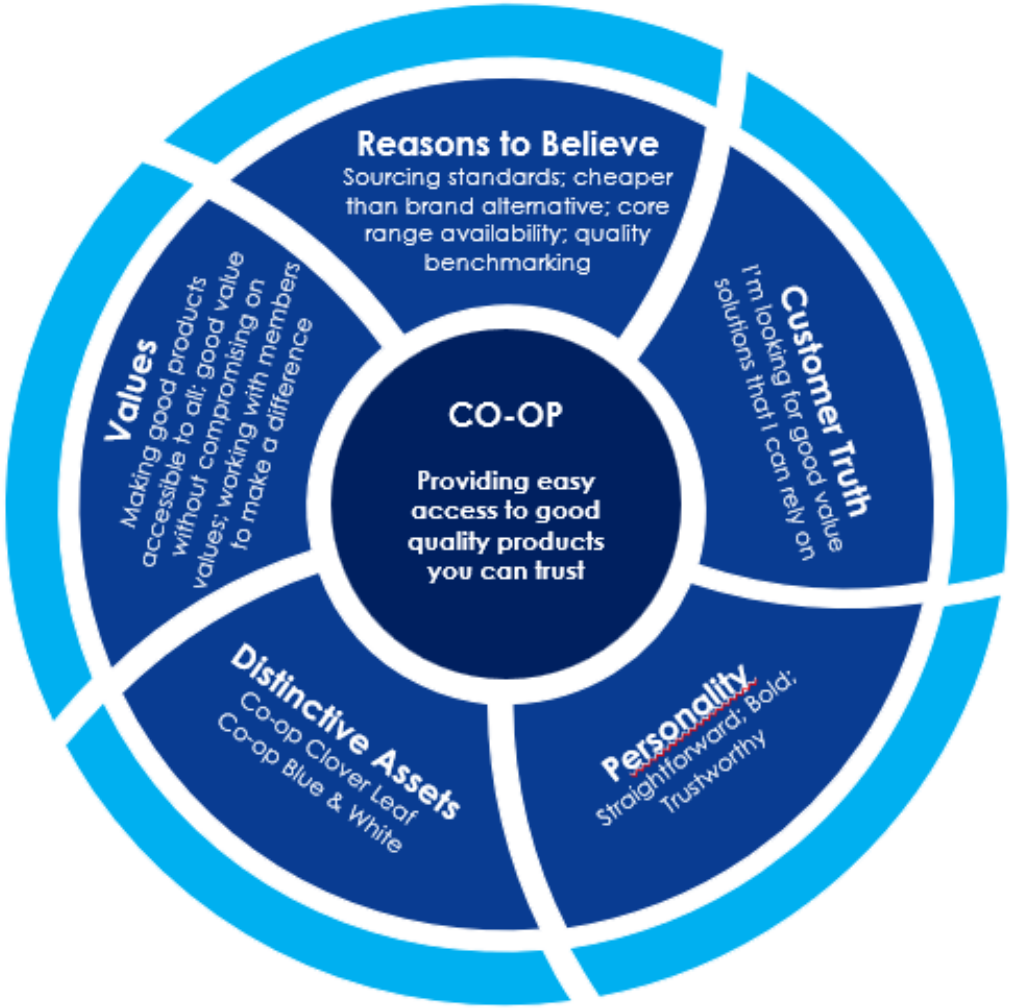
BEST

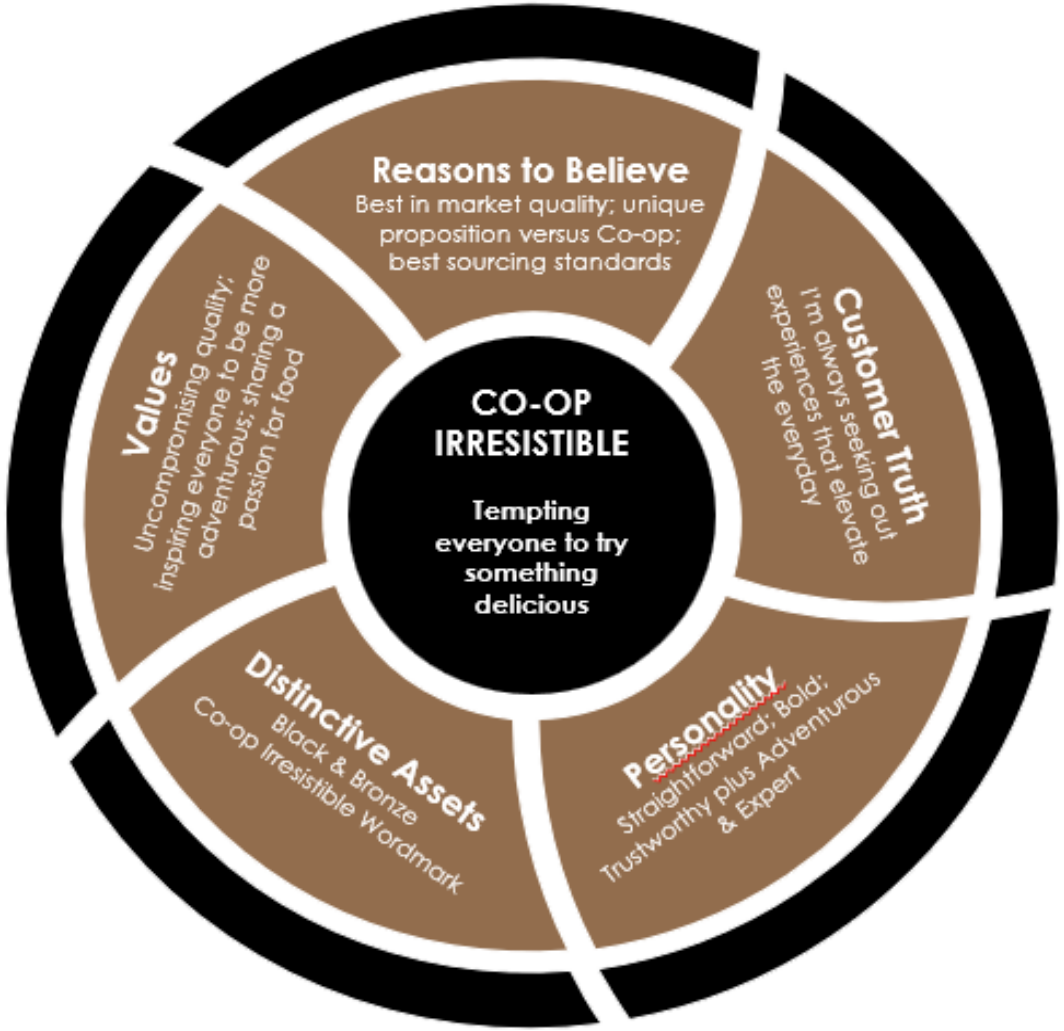
IRRESISTIBLE

Free From is the only sub brand in our portfolio

CO-OP CORE AND CO-OP IRRESISTIBLE BRAND POSITIONINGS

Purpose: Illustrate how our Co-op Owned Brands ladder back to the overarching Co-op Masterbrand ensuring that this delivers consistency for the consumer across all touchpoints with our Co-op





BUSINESS USE

CO-OP CORE

Purpose: Providing easy access to good quality products you can trust

Personality: Straightforward, Bold, Trustworthy

- Products that showcase our strong sourcing & quality standards, offering great value everyday products
- This tier includes the sub-range Free From, and Core Seasonal such as Halloween & Christmas







CO-OP IRRESISTIBLE

Purpose: Tempting everyone to try something delicious

Personality: Straightforward, Bold, Trustworthy and Adventurous & Expert

- Our best quality products, offering customers trade up in relevant missions & categories and across seasonal events.







BUSINESS USE

BRAND STANDARDS SUMMARY BY TIER

	Co-op Core	Co-op Irresistible (Premium)
SOURCING STANDARDS	Always adheres to Co-op sourcing standards and policies	Always adheres to Co-op sourcing standards and policies
QUALITY	Appropriate & Competitive Quality Invest in leading quality for identified categories in the Quality Strategy document. KQI products must adhere to Leading Quality always	Leading Quality Quality on par with market leaders. KQI products must adhere to Leading Quality always
PRODUCT COMPOSITION GUIDANCE	Must have a different ingredient QUID, ingredients or lower specification of ingredients to Premium The products should have limited use of non-store cupboard ingredients and where clean-label ingredients exist e.g. for flavours/colours or stability; they would be preferred. All products must strive to be optimised nutritionally to deliver health by stealth to customers Make products as inclusive as possible	Prepared/Recipe Products must have different ingredient QUIDs to Core and use high quality named ingredients or breeds/varieties and always using natural sources where relevant (See Proof Points section) Must be differentiated against its Co-op Core or Market Core equivalent aligned to what resonates best with the target customer and Market Premium norms. The products should have limited use of non-store cupboard ingredients and where clean-label ingredients exist e.g. for flavours/colours or stability; they would be preferred. Make products as inclusive as possible
VALUE & PROOF POINT	Value will be agreed by Brand Strategy Team and Copy Writer ahead of Gate 3 at the Brand Packaging Copy Approval Forum. Please refer to Values page in Additional Guidance in this document for more information Named Ingredient and Flavour as proof points will be agreed during Product Approval. Product must demonstrate exceptional taste, have achieved leading quality results and be approved by Head of Product Proof Point must be agreed ahead of Gate 3 at the Brand Packaging Copy Approval Forum.	Proof Points must be from the list below: • Provenance e.g. Aberdeen Angus • Process e.g. Bronze Die Cut • Named Ingredient e.g. Vintage Cheddar Cheese • Flavour e.g. Aromatic & Creamy If the Product Developer meets Provenance or Process, then there is no requirement to get agreement from Own Brand Strategy pre-Gate 3. If Named Ingredient/Flavour Description are to be used this must be presented during Product Approval and substantiated with evidence and approved by The Head of Product. This can then be presented at the Brand Packaging Copy Approval Forum for approval. Flavour Description is considered the least impactful for quality perception. Please refer to Proof Points page in Additional Guidance in this document for more information
STRUCTURAL PACKAGING	Packaging should be fit for purpose for customers and operationally. It should ideally be differentiated from Irresistible using intermediate packaging formats without over specifying material gauges and it should not drive additional cost. Always 100% recyclable. Ensure that products are accessible and that products can be opened and used with ease	Structural packaging should aim to be different to core but not if this will drive additional cost e.g. aesthetic design or innovative sustainability credentials . Please note that the type of substrate can be the same (e.g. cardboard tray) but the formation of the substrate should aim to be different)where possible. Care should be taken not to over specify material weights to create premiumisation Always 100% recyclable. Ensure that products are accessible and that products can be opened and used with ease
NOVELTY/FUN	Products can be Novelty/ Fun where appropriate Use of 'Pun' copy can be used on Seasonal Event Products for. Easter/Halloween/Valentines/Christmas. e.g. Merry Mince Pies Use of 'Pun' copy by exception only on AYR products in certain categories. Brand Strategy Team to approve this use of Pun ahead of Design Brief at the Brand Packaging Copy Approval Forum. Limited Edition is an opportunity to explore more trend led concepts/flavours in Core	Never Novelty but can be 'fun' where appropriate Limited Edition is an opportunity to explore more trend led concepts/flavours in Premium, but they must take into consideration all brand standards detailed above.

ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE

CO-OP CORE VALUES ENABLE US TO COMMUNICATE THE CO-OP DIFFERENCE

Our ambition is to ensure the values on products in ranges are aligned and make sense to the customer and aid ease of shop

- Value space is a key part of Pioneer 3 design route to show the Co-op Difference to customers and reassure on quality and sourcing.
- The 'VALUE' space is on front of pack and above the title.
- Our priority order for Values is ETHICS/WELFARE/SUSTAINABILITY/HEALTH
- The following categories must have a VALUE from the list above:
    - DAIRY
    - FTG SANDWICHES/SALADS/SNACKS/HOT FOOD/DRINKS
    - CONFECTIONERY
    - PRODUCE (Excl. Prepared Produce)
    - PROTEIN incl. COOKED MEATS/CONTI/MEAT FREE (Excl. Slow Cook/Ready To Cook)
    - FROZEN MEAT, FISH, VEG/FRUIT
    - SUGAR
    - CANNED FISH, VEG/FRUIT
    - HOT BEVS
- All other categories will be looked at on an individual basis using the following information: Customer decision tree, Market alignment, Space available on pack, Target consumer segment and Customer Demographic
- Consequent Values will be agreed and will be either: Range Name (e.g. Treats/ Italian Menu), No Value (e.g. Herbs & Spices) or Product Attribute (e.g. Quick Cook/ Smokey/Spicy)
- For NPD SKUs rather than a full range re-design we will always look at the existing range on shelf to make sure that they align and make sense for the customer.
- Final Decision Maker on Value will be Own Brand Strategy Manager
- Decision will be made at the Brand Packaging Copy Approval Forum and communicated with all stakeholders prior to Design brief
- Please see LIMITED EDITION guidance for Values – LIMITED EDITION SKUs are excluded from this and have their own tone of voice and use of the VALUE space

BUSINESS USE

CO-OP IRRESISTIBLE PROOF POINTS ENABLE US TO COMMUNICATE ELEVATED QUALITY IN OUR PREMIUM TIER

Our ambition is to ensure products in our premium tier showcase the elevated care and ingredients that are included in the products. The proof points provide a shortcut for the customer to understand why this product is Premium

- Proof Point space is a key part of Co-op Irresistible design route to show elevation on quality vs. Co-op Core and reassure the customer reassure on quality.
- The Proof Point is an opportunity to demonstrate exceptional provenance/processes and ingredients used.
- The Proof Point should demonstrate a tangible quality difference/step up.
- The proof point space is on front of pack and above the title.
- There is no priority order for the following Provenance/Process/Named Ingredient.
- If the Product Developer meets Provenance or Process, then there is no requirement to get agreement from Own Brand Strategy pre-Gate 3.
- If Named Ingredient/Flavour Description are to be used this must be presented during Product Approval and substantiated with evidence and approved by The Head of Product. Sufficient evidence must be available should it be required as to what elevates this product beyond Core. All to agree that this product would be recognised by Industry and Culinary Experts as Premium. This can then be presented with the approval at the Brand Packaging Copy Approval Forum.
- Flavour Description is considered the least impactful for quality perception.
- A proof point is ideally 2 words – 3 words maximum by exception.
- All categories must have a proof point except for Gifting which has a different design.
- For NPD SKUs rather than a full range re-design we should always look at the existing range on shelf to make sure that proof points align and make sense for the customer.
- Please see LIMITED EDITION guidance for Values – LIMITED EDITION SKUs are excluded from this and have their own tone of voice and use of the Proof Point space

HEALTH DESIGN – CO-OP CORE

Objective is to highlight to consumers products which are healthier choices

- Products must follow all brand tier standards in this document
- Product must be confirmed as nutritionally viable for inclusion by Nutrition Manager
- Value not required
- Must have 3 Health claims on front of pack
- Design route must follow Health design route



PROTEIN DESIGN – CO-OP CORE

Objective is to highlight products higher in protein to consumers with a specific protein dietary mission

- Products must follow all brand tier standards in this document
- Products must always follow specific product composition detailed on this page
- Products must be approved by Nutrition Manager
- Value will always be PROTEIN
- Protein products will always follow the Protein Design Route – PROTEIN icon can be used instead of the full design in certain circumstances, but this will need to be approved by Own Brand Strategy ahead of Design Brief
- Must be a health claim on pack e.g. "protein can help towards the maintenance of muscle mass and bones. Consume as part of a varied and balanced diet and healthy lifestyle."
- These products are not category restricted, but it is advised to follow market norms



NUTRITIONAL GUIDELINES

- Products must be manufactured to contain more protein than the standard version of the product, e.g. added protein powder to yoghurts vs. standard yoghurts.; extra meat content in ready meal
- Products naturally high in protein **must not** go into this design e.g. Hard-boiled eggs, Chicken Bites
- Products **must be approved** by the Nutrition Manger pre-gate 3, via email for written agreement and must also meet the below criteria:
  1. No red traffic lights
  2. Must meet your working salt target
  3. Must meet your calorie target if there is one
  4. Must be high in protein (20% of calories from protein)
  5. Products must be Non HFSS

PLANT BASED – CO-OP CORE

Objective is to normalise plant-based eating through expansion of product range in parent categories

- The GRO brand has been removed from use in 2025 and the GRO Brand design or use of Brand Logo is not allowed
- Products must follow all brand tier standards in this document
- Value will always be PLANT BASED
- Icons on front of pack must include 'Ve'
- Design route must follow Plant Based design route



NEW FLASH ON NPD

NEW flash is very useful to draw attention to newness in store – Opt out at Design Brief if this is not relevant for a specific product

- NEW flash on a NPD SKU should be requested by the Product Developer and should be added to the scoping document at Design Brief stage
- It must ONLY go on completely NEW to Co-op products – If it is an Improved Recipe then this must be 'NEW RECIPE'
- Additional consideration should be given to the following and discussed during the brief:
  - Is there enough space on pack or is this taking up valuable space?
  - Will there be SEL POS that can deliver the NEW message instead of going onto pack?
- 2 artwork files will be created; one with NEW and one without so we can change to 'without new'. Co-op absorb this cost.
- It must be agreed for all Products when the NEW flash will be removed – especially important for Ambient products with slower sell through



LIMITED EDITION – CO-OP CORE AND CO-OP IRRESISTIBLE

Objective is to bring regular newness to drive frequency across key categories

- Products must follow all brand tier standards in this document
- Pack Copy must adhere to standard process and use of an approved Limited Edition specific side of pack statement is allowed
- Trend Led Names are allowed but Sub Copy must explicitly explain the product ingredients
- Value and Proof Point space will be agreed at Brand Packaging Copy Approval Forum on a case-by-case basis and they do NOT have to follow Co-op Core guidelines as per slide 10

LIMITED EDITION IS ABOUT....	LIMITED EDITION ISN'T ABOUT...
Flavour profiles or formats, that are unique and different to Co-op To deliver newness & excitement to the range It's about on trends flavour and formats	Everyday flavours and formats Filling gaps in the range
Limited number of products per range event – Can utilise both Pioneer and Irresistible	Multiple numbers of products in the same formats e.g 3 ltd ed 5.5 cakes
Bringing back successful limited-edition lines into main range.	Instantly moving a successful product into main range.
All year-round suitable formats and flavours	Not about limited-edition seasonal products e.g. Christmas , Easter, Halloween, these are naturally limited to the seasonal event.
Being agile with launching and removing ltd edition products, agreeing MOQ packaging before launch and agree exit plans, that can adapt if sales are stronger or weaker.	Running out of stock and having gaps on the shelf.
Frequently changing the sku's, to ensure the product is truly limited edition. Aiming for 4 periods as maximum period in store. Ambient Categories may need to be in store for longer – SPDs to approve length of time in store	Only changing the product twice, a year. (some ambient exceptions to this)





BUSINESS USE

ORGANIC – CO-OP CORE & CO-OP IRRESISTIBLE

Objective is to highlight Organic products across our own brand range

- Products must follow all brand tier standards in this document
- Value will always be ORGANIC
- Products must follow parent category design route



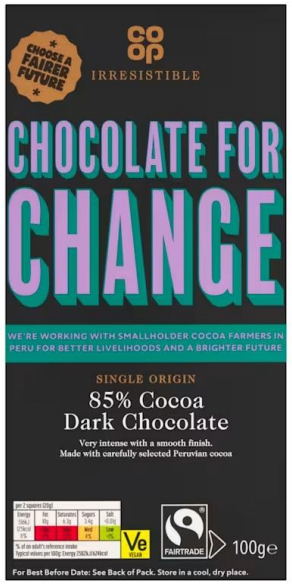




FAIRTRADE

Objective is to showcase Co-op's commitment to Fairtrade and highlight this difference to consumers

- Products must follow all brand tier standards in this document
- Value will follow parent category priority
- Icons on front of pack must always include Fairtrade logo
- Fairtrade 30 design route is ONLY on Irresistible Chocolate Block Bars
- Fairtrade 30 Icon/copy can be used on other products as a secondary message e.g. Easter Egg/ Ice Cream







BUSINESS USE

BRAND COLLABORATION WITH OWN BRAND

Brand Collaborations are an opportunity to explore new trends, attract new consumers and showcase our commitment to innovation

- Own Brand Strategy Manager must be engaged as early as possible for any proposed projects and before agreement is made with The Brand
- Approval to proceed with collaboration will be signed off by the Heads of Co-op Brand Strategy, Product Development, Technical & Quality.
- The Brand must be reputable, appealing to the target consumer and follow similar values to Co-op
- The Brand must adhere to all sourcing standards of the Co-op
- The Brand will add a unique twist, style or part to a product, that is not easily replicable
- The collaboration must be exclusive to Co-op for an agreed time
- The Brand must work collaboratively with the Co-op Packaging Design Team who will ensure that Co-op is fairly and relevantly represented on pack
- Collaboration can be in Co-op Core and Co-op Irresistible





MEMBER CREATED

Member Created products are on hold currently.

- Under discussion currently to agree the future of Member Created products
- Please ask Brand Team to support on any requests for Member Created products

BUSINESS USE

EVER GROUND – RETAIL ON DEMAND AND SELF-SERVE ONLY

Ever Ground is our Coffee Brand and showcases our commitment to Fairtrade Coffee

- Ever Ground should not be used for retail products
- The Ever Ground brand is still available as Self-Serve in our stores and also as part of the proposition for 'Retail on Demand'







APPENDIX

CO-OP OWNED BRAND CONTACT DETAILS

OWN BRAND STRATEGY

Contact for advice on: Brand Tier, Values, Proof Points, Awards, Packaging Design

Lucinda Thomson
Own Brand Strategy Manager
lucinda.homson@coop.co.uk

Sam Griffiths
Assistant Own Brand Strategy Manager
Sam.Griffiths@coop.co.uk

NUTRITION

Contact for advice on: Nutrition

Bryonie Hollaert
Senior Nutrition Manager
Bryonie.hollaert@coop.co.uk

PACKAGING

Contact for advice on: Structural Packaging and Code of Practice

Robert Thompson
Senior Packaging Manager
Robert.Thompson@coop.co.uk

POLICY & LABELLING

Contact for advice on: Policies, Sourcing Standards, Labelling, Pack Copy, Icons

Policy
Joseph Keating
Senior Agriculture & Fisheries Manager
Jospeh.keating@coop.co.uk

Labelling
Aaron Fawcett
Legal Labelling & Regulatory Manager
aaron.fawcett@coop.co.uk

ADDITIONAL SOURCES OF INFORMATION

QUALITY STRATEGY – Contact Paul Dempsey

SOURCING & POLICY – Available on Mycore

PACKAGING CODE OF PRACTICE – Contact Rob Thompson

DESIGN GUIDELINES – Contact Brooke Fletcher

STAGE & GATE PROCESS DFT Process SharePoint

ACCESSIBLE & INCLUSIVE GUIDANCE – Available from June 2025

BUSINESS USE